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# Book Review: TOTAL URBAN MOBILISATION: Ernst Jünger and the Post-Capitalist City By Krzysztof Nawratek

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## Book Review: TOTAL URBAN MOBILISATION: Ernst Jünger and the Post-Capitalist City By Krzysztof Nawratek

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### ABSTRACT:

*Total urban mobilization seeks meaning and reasons for the probability of post capitalist city in future. Krzysztof Nawratek discusses the forest rebel concept of Junger to define its actors and agencies for the next challenging world. Historically, Western cities are ethical followers of Rome in many ways; where the idea of emperor always influential. His existence is implicit at the same time his presence evident from the series of voids between diverse social institutions, as Badiou described. Previously, scholars like Kevin Lynch identified district, territory or edge from experienced based 'place making' which is similar to Cartesian 'neutral or tool based' space creation. He brought the Chinese concept of 'All under heaven,' a complex system is not referring any physical and territorial boundary of city. The author has seen these boundaries as opportunity for different agencies that might coexist and interact. Network of proper coexisting of urban agencies can trigger effective actors outside the capitalist world as a 'hole'. From such windows, non-profit logic of neoliberalism, ambiguity and messy contextualization will emerge as an alternative, post capitalist system in future. It might turn into a worldwide complex ecosystem, a second layer in global network in post capitalist stage. This is how Language could be re-invented in contrast to the Numbers, writes Ar. Sayed Ahmed.*

Ernst Junger become circumstantial after the harsh reality of WWII, as middle class took the lead to form the social backbone of capitalism. This book perceives our society as political, economic and environmental actors of efficiency. The author termed Junger's word Gestalt as "higher dimension" or the depth of society. Anyway, capitalism has unethical root, it's the consequence of past colonial greed, caused recent political right-wing in western world, responsible for monopoly of wealth and climate change-all have pushed us at an uncertain edge, as Nawratek described. Hope is also there. How? Majorities of human are going to live in cities in next century but in a closer network. Accumulation of different agencies might provide a conceptual gateway to the new post capitalist era which is now regarded as parasitic in today's capitalist world, will soon get importance.

For the author, it was important to identify urban space. Place or space could be linguistic and numeric. Communism is linguistic, emotional and subjective construct while capitalism is quantified entity. How an urban space germinates? Geometry gives any space a relation, while territory defines sense of fence (edge). Linguistics can add Junger's higher dimension (gestalt) to any urban district. He asks, if time decides the work-life (payment) in capitalist reality, why not Messianic time includes Messianic space? These processes of mediation between realities rely on linguistic and if not enough, then 'ontological imagination' could be another effective source. For example, Taube's nomadism identified Jews who got historical root which is not associated with geography. They exist successfully because they are 'people of time' as Deleuze and Guattari believed. According to Lefebvre, without separation; any urban fabric cannot exist even the city districts changes its character in the course of time. Such idea brings the term, 'Nomos' which means immutable standards of moral conduct. Lefebvre's concept for Nomos includes city mechanism with forces and actors. Again, Schmitt believes flat concept of war, friendship or enmity: "We and They." But it itself is a word of

controversy and unsolved as it shows relative benchmarks regarding cultural layers of time and geography. For urban study, Nomos might be referred as cohesion of contrasts amongst agencies. Nawratek believes hegemony of capitalism is full of fragmentations and decided time as measurement, but if it is in the form of neoliberalism; option comes closer for social interaction. From the socialist housing practice examples in Eastern Europe, he derived the relationships between the foundation of communism and linguistics was always “paradoxical”. The communist propaganda language and formation of public space are always intertwined to its ideology. In fact, urban development is one of many resultants for the basic formation of pre-linguistic action (gesture) in every stage of human history. Therefore, a post capitalist urban development will search for cooperation of experiments and strategies as well to cope with the xenophobia free evolution. Policies of non-government agencies are going to be the only essential form of interaction between all agencies in the upcoming future.

How these post capitalism strategies come out? Gramsci’s passive revolution could be the clue where asymmetric clash of capitalism and labor reveals the decisive strategy amongst several institutes. Nawratek gave example from Emmanuel Wallerstein, where European conquering history depicted the colonizer and the colonized were able to live in adjacent territories but both had interaction in a less capitalist land use pattern while the motto was derived from totally capitalist base. Aldo Rossi is contextual for such concept as well which he said motion of borders where defensive architecture creates territorial institutionalization. The network to continue European cities was missing between the achieved lands of colonies and Europe during the initial stage. After WWII, financial radicalization gave capitalism to invent a term ‘Globalization’ which is nomadic in character. In this era, dormant spaces became supermarket and apartments. While communist world shown social sharing in space making like parking and playground. The author included an interesting example of a house, which can both be capitalist or non- capitalist at a same time. Its space could be considered hierarchical because it contains all kind of possessions which are transcendent. Such house just reflects hegemony of capitalism from interior. On the other hand, by adopting non capitalist logic and linguistics, the same home could be an exemplification of liberating space in exteriors as it interacts with neighborhood and adjacent road. Now the house need to obey public, property and municipal rules, traffic rules, sound control and waste management, etc. So, it is a clear transition or duality in character from simple architectural production to the fact of state governance. This could be described as shifting hierarchy of social relationship.

Revolution happens through accumulation of dispersed authorities or organizations and diffused power. This power could be authority or agency which depends on their determining rules of any time. But every time the mechanism of commodification remains unchallenged and capitalism sustains. Thus, Nawratek advices that post capitalist city must include social compromise, mobilization and communal narratives. This narrative is a typology which might adopt Kojin Karatani’s ‘mode of exchange’, an idea of autonomous urban economic model. Post capitalist city will create some temporary autonomous zones, (TAZ) that will be nomadic by time-space character. At present stage, it cannot replace capitalism but it will appear as fluid hierarchy. Such exchange will ensure freely accessible urban infrastructures, which Bookchin described as ‘second layer’. Its motto will be to redistribute wealth and derive a mechanism of ‘gift economy’ where food and housing will be abundant. Such economy (Oikonomikos) relates society with family, like ancient barter system, where production could be exchanged but not the purpose; which is also good and natural according to classical thought of Aristotle. Failure of capitalism will be decided by Chrematistics that is nothing but excessive accumulation of impotent capital. Thus we need creativity to build a city of agency in post capitalist realm. Instead of Aquinas’s medieval concept ‘money as symbol or promise’ Nawratek believes that money is trade and actor. Indeed, He interestingly related classical philosophy as well.

Every fragments of the city, actor or action; could become semi-universal to prevent hegemonic narratives and logics of capitalism in spatial scales. The author brought a term “radical contextualization” for such post capitalist city which narrates how ‘one divides into two’. Because all hierarchies are time-space phenomena

and there is nothing absolutely true or achievable. From his previous book, “Hole in the Whole”, he made an argument that access to the whole is impossible, but there are some options (holes) left from where one can relate meaning and reasons for the existence of the city. City is not only as a territory of exploitation, but as space of human existence.

The city was always a political manifestation, traditionally. From ancient Greek polis to Roman Civitas (people) and Urbs (infrastructure), all were essential invention for survival at those ages. Therefore, Landownership regulation is a political product not only found in ancient era, but also contextual to contemporary public spaces. The classical cities left some clues in Jungers inclusive perspective to rethink modern cities. Greek cities are from bottom up process while Roman Urbs are of top down process, well said by Nawratek. He explains that Greek cities are the polis of framed perimeter in any given community and physicality. While the Roman Civitas are community and material constructed space which expanded in conquered territories and road network played a huge role for it. These are actually democratic production and part of a vast imperial network. In this point, Heideggerian denies social subjectivity while Jungers includes the idea of plexus. For example, if city considered as political idea then railway is political infrastructure. But even these plexus is not enough to mitigate the tension between fragment and the whole. Transportation routes create barrier to isolate communities but ensuring mobility amongst urban fabric. Contrast between China’s political structure and root level free economy was depicted in this regard. The author suggests, logic operating in spatial scale really differs from logic operating in the capitalist network. Diverse logic and language are needed to convert today’s city finance into the next post capitalist stage. But challenge is, we need to overcome territorial autonomy first.

Nawratek believes, to run a post capitalist city, four organizations are essential: two of them are traditional, education and religion; two are in contrast; government and NGOs. These NGOs could be the easiest but rebellious, somewhat like Junger’s forest of ecology. Junger’s geological-cultural-historical layers defined cities are likely any forest that grows by itself. Junger believed such city might bring “pluralistic totality of world-ness”. They will comprise half of the post capitalist world; other half will be conducted by abandoned fragments of capitalist city lead by partisans with strategies. Nawratek exemplified New York’s private garden and Poland’s squatting plots as idealistic projects during two poled world system of cold war which reflects Gramsci’s silent revolution. There is always a void between regulatory and irregularity. But they do not create border, rather the partisan and rebel are borders by themselves. Process of empire is actualization of the form, a current logic of world as a whole (Gestalt). The author also finds French scholar Pierre Manent contextual as how city, church and empire act along with false ethnical purity in western world (as another French philosopher Benoist also agreed). These cities survive as private domains to interact. Emperor here is only a hidden void or gate and mediator. In this western empirical realm, existence and coexistence is absent. Author suggests Chinese concept of ‘all-under-heavens’ which will convey polyphonic narratives from some commonly agreed institutions, like diverse fragments of reality to form Zhao’s “Worldness” as well. The future of post capitalist cities will depend on Gestalt Empire of Anthropocene, here economy will mobilize power and avoid technology intensified power. There, the new emperor will have his own agency which will become a new political form eventually.

On concluding remark, Nawratek described urban prototype is a never finished product: *Statu nascendi*. It is a continuous transformation from mode of production to mode of exchange: ‘more than many but less than one’. Nawratek thinks that socially exclusive practice of New York could be altered with the prototyping system of Madrid. Though built structures of city are ‘frozen agencies’ but they produce reaction of power. It is not in unity but pluralistic, where diverse fragments of reality can communicate and interact. Post capitalist city should convert those frozen agencies into a complex urban ecosystem, not for work and workers only, but for human being. To recapitulate, post capitalist cities will create highly interdependent and of polyphonic narratives in a global network.

## NOTAS

- \* Ar. Sayed Ahmed is a Bangladeshi practicing architect and academician. He studied architecture from SUST; Sylhet. He was lecturer in the department of architecture, Bangladesh University, Dhaka. He successfully got his masters' degree at Architectural heritage conservation with DAAD scholarship from Anhalt university of Applied Sciences, the Bauhaus of Dessau, Germany. He specializes in architectural design, art appreciation, cultural studies, art philosophy, architectural history, urban collective memory, material and climatic issues regarding vernacular architecture and so on. He has already published articles from several journals around the globe which include countries like UK, USA, Austria, Australia, Nigeria, India, Iraq, Italy, Tunisia, China and Indonesia. He is also in editorial board of ATINAR journal, Greece and CHITROLEKHA journal, India. He participated in World architecture festival in Berlin, November 2016 as first Bangladeshi participant where his idea was selected as one of the 8 student group project at that year. His recent study published from the largest platform of Asian architects, ARCASIA's 19th forum of 2017 in Jaipur, India. He presented his masters' thesis in Harvard faculty club and Oxford Brookes for prestigious conferences in August and September, 2018. He chaired common ground conference as one of the 11 selected promising urban researchers of year 2018, in October at Heidelberg University.

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